

HUNTON PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 16TH SEPTEMBER 2019 AT 7:30PM
AT HUNTON VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT: Cllr D Heaton in the Chair, Cllrs A Trought, R Lee, H Ward, T Stanbridge, J Goddard and G Thomas, and Mrs S Goodwin, Clerk.

IN ATTENDANCE: PCSO Martin Chivers was in attendance until Item 6.2. Twenty members of the public were in attendance. Five left after the open session. Eleven left after Item 6.2. Two left before Item 7. One left after Item 9.2.

OPEN SESSION

Cllr Heaton welcomed PCSO Martin Chivers to the meeting to listen to concerns and answer questions from members of the public about rural crimes that have occurred in and around Hunton.

PCSO Chivers introduced himself as the local PCSO for Hunton and six other villages. He shared the crime figures for Hunton for July (6), August (0) and September (0), compared to Headcorn (16 in August) and Shepway (99 in August).

The Rural Task Force (RTF) policing is not always visible as unmarked cars are used as well as marked cars. The police are in the village on a regular basis but there are ten officers in the RTF, to cover the whole of Kent. They will cover rural crimes such as lamping, tractor thefts and livestock worrying. There is also one Local Policing Team (LPT) covering urban and rural areas, where the officers work 8 hour rotating shifts. The PCSOs will stay in the villages.

CCTV is a big issue as people are not telling the PCSO that they have captured offences on CCTV or that it is ready to collect to be taken as evidence. Images are posted on Facebook of offenders, but the police cannot arrest these individuals without reasonable grounds or evidence.

Members of the public made comments and asked a number of questions to PCSO Chivers:

There have been some crimes in Hunton in August and Hunton cannot be compared to Headcorn and Shepway, which are much larger areas. Residents need to provide Kent Police with evidence if there have been crimes.

Hunton Court had CCTV footage, but it was not collected for six weeks. The area covered is extensive and officers have to prioritise crime reports.

Has anyone been prosecuted? Yes, one offender has been sentenced.

Was this person part of a gang? He was well known for rural crime.

The frustration is that potential offenders are known to the police and are inter-generational. They cause a nuisance in the community and, while it is accepted that police resources are limited, residents are fed up of these people continuing to commit crimes. I agree, the issue is not having sufficient police officers to deal with the crimes. The LPT covers the town and rural areas, a huge area. In some families, crime does pass down the generations. The police do try and educate families, particularly youths, to try and turn them away from crime. Cllr Heaton added that the police do not prosecute, the CPS does, and will only do so if it is in the public interest. The police have to collect a great deal of evidence.

Does it have to be CCTV evidence? Cllr Heaton – offenders can use false number plates or wear concealing clothing, so CCTV sometimes only gives the time of the offence and the modus operandi. On its own, CCTV is probably not enough.

We had a burglary, the police will not take the glove left behind will they? Yes, I will collect it as there will be DNA in the glove, but I need to be told so I can hand it to the police officers as evidence.

Can you share information with residents if you are looking for a particular vehicle? No, I am not allowed to give out car registration numbers or descriptions as it is deliberately targeting people. If you see something that seems suspicious in the village, call 101.

I can understand that the police cannot ask us to search for vehicles, but if we look ourselves and provide the police with information on suspicious vehicles, is that acceptable? Yes.

Residents can email Huntonwatch, who will pass it on to the police. The police need information from people in Hunton, call it in.

With regard to the sharing of information with each other, surely there is more value in having real time relay of information, by using a WhatsApp group for example? WhatsApp relies on phone signal strength. If you see something suspicious, call 999.

What about a suspicious event, not necessarily a break in? Call it in.

The police do not have the manpower for a quick response. We are restricted by our numbers. The Prime

Minister is promising 20,000 more officers and more from the Kent Police & Crime Commissioner's tax hike. PCSO numbers are increasing also, to provide a more visible presence. We are doing everything we can.

Do the police have any input on planning applications for new traveller sites? No, the police have no powers. The police are not allowed to get involved in planning; it is up to the local authority.

How many patrols were there in Hunton in July and August? At least five. There have been five units in the last three weeks. I am in the village nearly every day but have seven parishes to cover on my own so I do the best I can.

Will we get police houses back in villages with the promised increase in police officers? No, that is not likely. With the budget cuts, police houses had to be sold.

Is there anything else we can do as parishioners? Just report anything suspicious to 999 or 101. Do not put yourself at risk but you can take images from behind locked doors if you are safe. You can challenge someone but withdraw if the situation becomes threatening.

Who picks up the intelligence when you are not in? Calls are always picked up and tasked out. I will then do a follow up visit.

1. APOLOGIES

All parish councillors were present at the meeting.
Borough Cllr L Parfitt-Reid had sent her apologies.

2. FILMING AND RECORDING

The members of the public did not wish to film, record or photograph the meeting.

3. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS

3.1 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interests.

3.2 Dispensations

There were no requests for dispensations.

4. MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 15TH JULY 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on 15th July 2019 had been previously distributed. The Chairman signed off the official copy of the minutes.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES NOT INCLUDED IN THE AGENDA

Item 10.3 – The new gate post for the field gate has been installed by Tate & Tonbridge Fencing.

Item 10.3 – KALC has been contacted about the litter picks. MBC is unable to help.

Item 11.4 – Memory sticks have been purchased for Huntonwatch to copy CCTV images for the police.

Item 11.8 – Q-Tec Solutions Ltd will be installing the security light and mending the existing lights in September.

6. POLICE

6.1 Police

PCSO Martin Chivers provided the following crime figures for Hunton for July and August:

05/07/19 – Burglary

06/07/19 – Burglary

15/07/19 – Burglary

19/07/19 – Attempted burglary

23/07/19 – Burglary

29/07/19 – Burglary

PCSO Chivers provided the following report/information:

If CCTV has been recorded and is ready for collection please call 101, quoting the crime reference number. The officer in charge of the investigation will then arrange collection.

The Rural Task Team have been active in the area over the summer months, continuing to look at rural crimes. They are currently looking at known offenders in the area but need sufficient evidence and

reasonable grounds to make an arrest.

PCSO Chivers advised that Speedwatch is useful for providing intelligence on suspicious vehicles. Cllr Goddard remarked that many people committing crimes in the locality are habitual criminals but presumably weight of evidence is required so the CPS will take the case forward. Other than gathering evidence, villagers would like to know if there is anything else they can do to help in getting these people prosecuted. PCSO Chivers stated that there is nothing more they can do, other than gather evidence. He is not aware of whether the CPS provide feedback on why they choose not to take cases forward.

Cllr Heaton was concerned about the lack of cover when PCSO Chivers is off duty. There is a team of five people who provide this cover and respond to calls, they just do not have the time to drive around the villages as they have their own work loads. When Cllr Goddard asked for the PCSO's contact details, PCSO Chivers advised that they do not give out their email or mobile numbers. If it is an emergency (a crime in progress, including seeing suspicious vehicles), call 999. An officer will come out, create a crime report and if the parishioner is able to download CCTV footage (on to a CD preferably but USB stick if not), the PCSO will collect it. If it is a non-emergency (a crime has already been committed) call 101. The parishioner can also contact Huntonwatch and pass on any information to them.

Cllr Trought commented that it had been very helpful having PCSO Chivers at the meeting and hoped it could be a regular occurrence. Villagers can feel neglected, but she was not aware of the unmarked cars in the village. PCSO Chivers was asked whether the local crimes were a mixture of organised and ad hoc crimes - he was not aware of any organised crime this side of Maidstone. There has been anti-social behaviour in Coxheath, but the police are trying to get those responsible moved through their housing provider. Cllr Trought would be glad for any feedback from the police. PCSO Chivers is working on resolving issues. He is intending to become a police office, meaning he will only be here for the next six months to a year, after which a new PCSO will take over in Hunton. He is working on a handover document and will let the Clerk know his leaving date.

Cllr Heaton thanked PCSO Chivers very much for attending the meeting.

Members **Agreed** that a letter should be sent to PCC Matthew Scott, asking him to reinforce the Rural Task Teams.

ACTION: CLERK

6.2

Huntonwatch

Steve Wyles did not completely agree with the Hunton crime figures provided by PCSO Chivers. There was a burglary the previous Saturday and a couple of crimes in August. The crime figures for June and July were higher than the whole of the last 18-24 months. Criminals are targeting remote and isolated buildings, aiming for mowers, strimmers, etc. On the day the cricket pavilion was broken into there were nine others targeted in other villages, but it is unclear whether this was organised.

Huntonwatch will explore the use of WhatsApp but this may be counterproductive as it could be seen as targeting 'known' people. The quickest way to get a response is by calling 999, or 101. Residents should stay safe and not confront suspicious individuals.

Huntonwatch has been communicating with PCSO Chivers and the Rural Crime Team, aiming to get as much information as possible to the police and asks people in Hunton to speak to their Huntonwatch Co-ordinator. It is not necessarily an instant messaging system. Huntonwatch consists of volunteers and is not a mouthpiece of the police, it just passes information on.

CCTV is useful but it is time consuming to look through many hours of footage and record it for the police. The footage is also only kept for two weeks. It is most useful if Huntonwatch is contacted as soon as possible by anyone concerned about possible criminal activity. Huntonwatch also picks up information from Facebook.

Huntonwatch is producing a pull-out for the Hunton Herald to provide: a summary of the latest scams; an update on Huntonwatch activities; what Huntonwatch is about; advice on securing property; information about CCTV cameras; and emergency numbers.

Since the Annual Parish Meeting, Huntonwatch has welcomed a dozen more members and there has been better communication, but more members are always welcomed.

Cllr Heaton thanked Mr Wyles for all the work Huntonwatch is doing.

7.

LOCAL COMMUNITY

7.1

King George V Playing Field

The Chairman of the King George V Playing Field Committee, Simon Taylor, reported on the last meeting, held on 11th September:

The showers are leaking in the Football Club changing rooms. A plumber will be called to fix the problem.

There is also a hornets' nest which needs dealing with near the changing rooms. A hole needs to be drilled through the newly installed field gate post for the chain. Robert Cox to do various cutting back work and cut up a fallen bough. Health and safety – two MBC reports have been received. No issues reported. Finance – there is £8,925 remaining in funds. The Committee will consider contributing towards the new changing rooms at the Bowls Club after the Parish Council has considered its contribution. A grant of £274.99 has been awarded from County Cllr Stockell's KCC Member Fund for a new line marking machine and paint. Perry Luck has joined as a new Trustee – there are now two representatives from the Football Club on the Committee. The Football Club has had issues with hirers of the Village Hall who believe they have priority over the car park. This is not the case and is written in the hire terms and conditions.

7.2 Hunton Village Hall Committee

The Chairman of Hunton Village Hall Committee, Cllr Trought, provided the following report:
The last Committee meeting was held on 20th August.

A grant of £1,000 has been received from the Calor Fund, plus almost £500 from crowdfunding. The money will be used to fund a new cooker and improvements to the kitchen area.

7.3 Hunton Primary School

Cllr Trought reported that Hunton Court has given the school a piece of land to use, presumably for parking.

7.4 Hunton Village Club

Cllr Trought reported that the Beer Festival and Gin Shack had been well supported. After costs, the Village Club earned over £900.

7.5 Traffic and Road Safety Working Party

Cllr Goddard has contacted County Cllr Stockell and Borough Cllr Parfitt-Reid to request funding for speed monitoring on East Street, which will cost £450 plus VAT. Cllr Parfitt-Reid has £200 available for the parish which Members **Agreed** should be spent on the speed monitoring. The T&RSWP will select the most appropriate locations for the speed monitoring and then canvass residents.

Cllr Goddard has looked into the 30mph flashing signs which could be used for traffic calming on West Street, but they cost £8,600 each and there is no concrete evidence to suggest that they would slow motorists down. Cllr Trought was not in favour of flashing lights. Speeding is a particular issue on West Street when exiting Grove Lane and Bishops Lane due to the lack of visibility. Members agreed that cars parked around Grove Lane and Bishops Lane are more of an issue than speeding, some of which belong to school staff. Members **Agreed** that the data from the speed monitoring exercise on East Street should be reviewed to determine the speeds vehicles are travelling and the flashing signs should not be considered for the time being.

7.6 Tree & Pond Warden

The Tree & Pond Warden, Mike Summersgill, was unable to attend the meeting but had provided the following update:

There is nothing new to report on Hunton's trees or ponds, the ponds are mostly dry. I have attended a free training afternoon on Non-Native Invasive Species at Teston, led by Medway River Partnership with the Environment Agency and a couple of national experts (fish and molluscs). I have also been put in contact with the new Yalding parish councillor with tree responsibilities, who has been dealing with the old orchard removal this summer down Lughorse Lane. We are liaising on records and responsibilities, so it is a good 'local' liaison.

8. COUNTY & BOROUGH COUNCILLORS

8.1 County Councillor

County Cllr Stockell was unable to attend the meeting.

8.2 Borough Councillors

None of the Borough Councillors were able to attend the meeting.

9. PARISH COUNCILLORS

9.1 Liaison with External Bodies

Cllr Thomas reported that the main communications have been with other parishes on the MBC Local Plan Review. Cllr Thomas is also writing a response on behalf of CPRE. The MBC consultation response form is very long-winded, asking many questions, some of which are quite ‘loaded’.

9.2 Footpaths and Ditches

Cllr Heaton reported that a resident had been in contact concerning the state of the River Beult, including the duckweed. Natural England have a river-wide plan for issues affecting rivers and to counter some of the flood risks.

Cllr Ward reported that there have been issues behind the cottages at the top of George Street as a sewer overflowed and ran into ditches. It was reported to the Environment Agency by Mike Summersgill (Tree & Pond Warden) and Southern Water came out.

9.3 Communication & Events

Cllr Trought reported that the Beer & Gin Festival was held on 7th September and the Village Club Film & Supper was held on 21st September.

The following events are planned in the coming months:

- 6th October – Harvest Festival Supper
- 12th October – Walk & Lunch
- 17th November – Walk & Lunch
- 23rd November – Friends of St Mary’s event - Brian Mortimer’s old band
- 30th November – Bubble Club event at the Village Hall – Wille Edwards
- 6th December – Village Club AGM
- Early December – Village Club Quiz Night

Cllr Ward noted that there was an article in the Hunton Herald about the Fete Committee stepping down, but the Christmas Fair will definitely be going ahead on 14th December.

9.4 Planning Issues and Consultations

Cllr Thomas has written a response to the Durrants Farm planning application. The design of the houses is better than in the original application, but there are still too many and they are too large.

9.5 Utilities

Cllr Stanbridge stated that there is a perception that BT internet is getting worse in the village. He will raise it with BT as a village issue. ACTION: CLLR STANBRIDGE

East Street is being dug up regularly by South East Water. Cllr Stanbridge will draft a letter asking what plans are in place for work on the East Street water main. ACTION: CLLR STANBRIDGE

10. OTHER PARISH MATTERS

10.1 Traffic Calming Measures on West Street

Covered under Item 7.5.

10.2 Clerk’s Report

Insurance claims have been submitted to Zurich Municipal for the damage caused to the cricket pavilion and gate post during the break in and for the stolen mower.

11. CONSULTATIONS

11.1 Kent Police & Crime Commissioner – Annual Policing Survey 2019

The survey is to provide feedback to the Kent Police & Crime Commissioner on safety, what matters in the local community and on how Kent Police are performing, amongst other matters. This is to assist Matthew Scott in making decisions about policing priorities and spending.

Members agreed that Matthew Scott should be contacted about increasing police resources in rural areas, as

agreed under Item 6.

11.2 Maidstone Borough Council – Local Plan Review Regulation 18 Consultation

A review of the adopted Maidstone Borough Local Plan is underway. As a first step, Maidstone Borough Council has prepared a Scoping, Themes & Issues document which provides background on the things they think will be important. MBC is asking for views on these matters and any others the Local Plan Review will need to cover.

Cllr Thomas **Agreed** to prepare a response to the consultation.

ACTION: CLLR THOMAS

12. FINANCE

12.1 Budget Monitoring Report

The Budget Monitoring Report to 31st August 2019 was **Noted**.

Cllr Goddard advised that the budget for the installation of kerbstones near the school could be removed as the work will not be going ahead.

ACTION: CLERK

12.2 Income Received

The following income has been received since the last meeting:

South Eastern Power Networks - Wayleaves	£11.97
Hunton Parish Hall Committee – FIT receipt	£209.15
Hunton Parish Hall Committee – FIT receipt	£775.90

Cllr Stanbridge reviewed and signed the bank reconciliation.

12.3 Payments Made

Members **Approved** the following payments made since the last meeting:

SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – June	£453.30
DD – ICO – Data protection fee	£35.00
SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – July	£453.30
SO – Sharon Goodwin – Salary & office allowance – August	£453.30

12.4 Cheques for Signature

Members **Agreed** that the following payments be approved, and the cheques were signed by Cllrs Thomas and Ward:

300307 – Q-Tec Solutions Ltd – Call out to demonstrate download of CCTV images	£48.00
300308 – Hunton Parish Hall Committee – Contribution towards running costs (2 nd half)	£500.00
300309 – CPRE – Annual membership subscription	£36.00
300310 – Sharon Goodwin – Travel expenses/Postage (July to September)	£36.75
300311 – Tate and Tonbridge Fencing Ltd – Installation of new gate post after break in	£555.60

12.5 Hunton Bowls Club

(This Item was moved after Item 6.2)

Cllr Heaton advised that Hunton Bowls Club has submitted an application for funding towards the replacement of the changing rooms. The Parish Council is constrained to some degree as the Bowls Club is a private club. However, the application does refer to increased community use with open days and other activities.

Members asked questions to Angela Baptie and Colin Slattery from the Bowls Club:

Were other quotes obtained for the work, other than the one accepted? Yes, two other quotes were received.

Is the existing shortfall for the project around £4,000? Yes.

Will there be a damp-proof membrane on the floor? The changing rooms will be on pads; a suspended floor off the ground.

Can the Bowls Club apply for any other grants? Not at the moment as they had to have a cut-off point.

Why does the Bowls Club own the building, and could it be gifted to the Parish Council? Cllr Heaton advised that this discussion went on for seven years some years ago and went to legal opinion, so is not a

route to go down.

Cllr Heaton advised that any funding provided by the Parish Council would have to be in line with the benefit to the community from the project. Mrs Baptie stated that the Pre-school had visited the Bowls Club and they could perhaps get the school involved and other events to engage people from the village. Members **Agreed** that the Parish Council should provide £1,000 in funding, under Section 137, towards the new changing rooms, payable on completion of the work.

12.6 Car Park Gate

(Item moved after the Hunton Bowls Club item, before Item 7)

Simon Taylor, Chairman of the King George V Playing Field Committee, has obtained three quotes for a gate to secure the entrance to the Village Hall car park. There have been a number of break ins involving vehicles, which leaves the buildings in the area vulnerable. The quotes have been supplied for a 5-metre swing barrier, lockable by padlock. Keys will be available to all the clubs and other parties who need them. There will be a rota for locking the barrier in the evening and unlocking it in the morning, to ensure that it keeps vehicles out of the car park after dark. Consideration had been given to installing bollards instead of a barrier, but they are heavy and more difficult to operate.

The quotes obtained were:

- Barriers Direct - £1,990.50 plus VAT
- Arkas - £1,973 plus VAT
- Jacksons Fencing - £1,488.10 plus VAT or £2,013 plus VAT for a heavy-duty barrier

Members **Agreed** that the Jacksons Fencing quote of £2,013 plus VAT should be accepted as Jacksons Fencing is a local company and has completed work to a high standard for the Parish Council previously. Mr Taylor will arrange for Jacksons Fencing to carry out a site survey. The Clerk will contact UK Power Networks for a map of underground cabling at the site.

ACTION: CLERK

12.7 St Mary's Church

Reverend Peter Callway has approached the Parish Council to request funding towards the installation of a composting toilet at St Mary's Church, to enable community users of the church to have a facility which is missing at present. Beneficiaries will include those attending weddings and funerals, along with pupils from the local school who use the church frequently.

Members **Agreed** that a contribution of £500 should be provided under Section 137, as the toilets at the Village Hall have to be used currently if the church holds a community event. Cllr Heaton will inform Reverend Callway that the contribution will be paid on completion of the work.

ACTION: CLLR HEATON

12.8 Annual Review of Insurance

The Parish Council's insurance policy is due for renewal on 1st October 2019 for the year to 30th September 2020. The current insurance provider, Zurich Municipal, has provided a quotation for £865.93 (2018: £859.02). Came & Company was approached for a quotation but stated that the premium this year would be increased from last year, so they would probably be uncompetitive. The premium offered last year was £1,055.34. They have not provided a quotation.

Members **Agreed** that the insurance should be renewed with Zurich Municipal and cheque 300312 was written for £865.93, signed by Cllrs Trought and Stanbridge.

13. PLANNING

13.1 Planning Application

13.1.1 Bridge House, East Street - 19/503929/LBC

Amendments to Listed Building Consent 18/504475/LBC (Listed Building Consent for erection of a single storey rear extension connecting main dwelling and store/garage; conversion of store into a habitable space; erection of a single storey rear extension to existing garage, and demolition of existing shed and erection of a single storey office outbuilding) being installation of a window to the home office, and installation of a conservation roof light and a high level window to the garage. Revised details – amended description.

Parish Council recommendation: No objection.

13.2 Planning Decisions

No planning decisions have been made by Maidstone Borough Council since the last Planning Committee

meeting.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next full Council Meeting will be held on **Monday 18th November 2019** at 7:30pm at Hunton Village Hall.

There being no further matters to discuss the meeting closed at 10:30pm.